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Agenda item 121
Pattern of conferences

Utilization of the United Nations conference centres at Bangkok and Addis Ababa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Greater utilization of the United Nations conference centres at Bangkok and Addis Ababa, beyond their use to meet the conference requirements of the Economic Commission for African (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), has been constrained by a number of factors. These have included uncertainty about the appropriate use of the facilities, particularly as venues for private sector and commercial events; the very limited opportunities for rerouting meetings included in the United Nations calendar of conferences; inadequate staffing structures for the management of the centres; lack of funds for marketing and promotional activities; and regional instability. Recently, however, both ESCAP and ECA have taken steps to staff and manage the centres more adequately and to provide resources for marketing operations. Promotional campaigns are being launched through the use of web sites, brochures, videos, hosted tours, package deals, mailings and direct marketing to attract more users, mainly among United Nations agencies, national institutions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, but also private sector entities. Utilization statistics for the past 18 months have begun to show steady improvement.

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I. Introduction

1. In section B, paragraph 27, of its resolution 54/248 of 23 December 1999, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure an increase in the utilization of the regional centres in future work programmes and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. In paragraph 120 of its resolution 54/249, of the same date, the Assembly expressed deep concern about the underutilization of the conference centres at Bangkok and Addis Ababa, and requested the Secretary-General to develop and implement a strategy for increasing their use and to report thereon to the Assembly by the end of its fifty-fourth session.

2. At its substantive session of 2000, held from 7 to 9 August, the Committee on Conferences heard an oral report on the constraints that had affected the utilization of the conference centres in Bangkok and Addis Ababa and the action being taken to improve the situation. In its report to the General Assembly for 2000,[1] the Committee, while regretting that the written report on the subject was not available at the time, took note of the oral report presented by the Secretariat and agreed to keep the item under review (paras. 91-93).

3. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001,[2] noted the need to set up a marketing strategy for the Centre at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and expressed the opinion that the existence of a potential market and opportunities for success should be taken into account before committing resources for such a strategy (para. V.33). In the same report, the Advisory Committee took note of recent data on the utilization of the conference facilities at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) (paras. V.53 and V.94).

4. Neither in the General Assembly nor in the Committee on Conferences has any concern been expressed about the utilization of regional centres other than those in Bangkok and Addis Ababa. Moreover, in a Secretariat-wide coordination meeting of conference services managers convened at Headquarters on 10 and 11 July 2000 by the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, and henceforth to become an annual event, the officials responsible for conference services at other regional centres reported no difficulties in this connection.

5. Consequently, the present report focuses on the utilization of the conference centres at Bangkok and Addis Ababa.

6. In a report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on a management audit of the conference centres at ECA and ESCAP conducted in 1998 (A/54/410), the Office noted that both conference facilities were designed to satisfy the needs of the two regional commissions into the twenty-first century and that the physical capacity of the two centres far exceeded the level of substantive operations that they were designed to service. In the case of the Bangkok Centre, the physical capacity requirements were based on statistics of meeting activities of the ESCAP secretariat in the 1980s, with a projected increase over the next two decades.

II. Utilization of the Conference Centre at Bangkok

Background

7. The United Nations Conference Centre at Bangkok was officially opened in April 1993 and is an integral part of the ESCAP building complex. Its facilities include the ESCAP Hall, with 9 seats at the head table and seating for 200 representatives at the table with microphones and 563 advisers and other participants, two conference rooms each with 131 seats at the table and 233 seats for other participants, a third room with 87 seats at the table and 182 seats for other participants and a fourth with 57 seats at the table and 118 seats for other participants. All of these are equipped for simultaneous interpretation. There are also nine smaller meeting rooms of varying sizes (12 to 56 seats at the table) with no interpretation facilities.

8. The services and facilities of the Centre are made available, on a reimbursable cost basis, to users other than ESCAP. A reimbursement schedule has been established to cover three different categories of users: (a) United Nations bodies and organs, specialized agencies and related offices; (b) Member States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other non-profit-making organizations; (c) general users, mostly in the private sector.

9. In all circumstances, the use of the Centre's facilities and services is subject to prior approval by

the Chief, Division of Administration, and is limited to events that are consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and that have some relation to or connection with the work of the Organization, for example, events in the fields of social and economic development, technology transfer, health, education, communications, transportation, tourism or urban and rural development. The facilities are not made available for events that have political, ethnic or religious involvement or those directly promoting the sale or marketing of particular products or services.

10. The Centre was the venue for a total of 353 events in 1997 (268 ESCAP, 45 non-ESCAP and 40 catering functions), 374 events in 1998 (301 ESCAP, 42 non-ESCAP and 31 catering functions) and 423 events in 1999 (314 ESCAP, 43 non-ESCAP and 66 catering functions). From January to September 2000, some 335 events have taken place at the Centre (232 ESCAP, 42 non-ESCAP and 61 catering functions).

Constraints

11. In considering the question of the utilization of the ESCAP Centre since it became operational, it is worth noting that it was originally established as a conference facility for the Commission and was not intended for revenue-producing uses. For this reason, all the meeting rooms were permanently configured in the typical conference room style of the United Nations, that is, one front seat at the table and one seat (chair only) behind. This type of set-up is usually not appropriate for non-United Nations meetings or events, for which the typical requirement is for all seats to be at the table. The Centre has been managed in isolation by ESCAP management, without any guidance on developing approaches for increasing utilization.

12. It is also necessary to take into account the legal constraints imposed on the possibilities for expanding utilization of the Conference Centre. As early as 1992, the Legal Counsel confirmed in a memorandum addressed to the Executive Secretary of ESCAP that the Centre could be used for meetings of non-United Nations entities, but only when such meetings were consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and were of a non-commercial nature. This same guideline is established in paragraph 11 of administrative instruction ST/AI/416, which stipulates that outside entities, including non-governmental organizations, may not hold meetings or events on United Nations premises to conduct their own organizational business or to advance their own purposes or aims.

13. The possibility of the Centre's being made available to fee-paying exhibitors has raised the concern that this activity may appear to be primarily commercial in nature and therefore inappropriate. Similarly, cultural or social fund-raising events, although less well-defined from a legal perspective, would not seem to be related to the basic mandates of the Organization.

14. No resources have been earmarked for the marketing and promotion of the Centre, and work related to the provision of facilities and services for additional non-United Nations activities has been assigned to ESCAP staff who have other primary duties.

15. In addition, security concerns regarding the entire ESCAP building complex and its 900 staff have precluded consideration of large-scale commercialization of the Centre.

Action taken

16. ESCAP has recently redeployed a P-2 post to its Conference Services Unit with the specific function of assisting in the management of the Centre and, in particular, in the efforts to increase its utilization.

17. As a way to promote increased use of the Centre, full information on the services and facilities offered there has been included on the ESCAP web site (unescap.org).

18. To facilitate use, costing and reimbursement, a package-deal pricing structure has been introduced, including meeting room facilities, lunch, coffee service and other amenities.

19. In addition, to promote and increase awareness of the work of the United Nations, the United Nations Information Service and other ESCAP entities have been organizing briefings in the Centre for students, local organizations and other bodies.

Plans for the future

20. Taking into account the legal framework mentioned above, ESCAP has been developing initiatives to increase the utilization of the Centre by focusing on expanded usage by United Nations organizations, Member States, intergovernmental organizations, national institutes and other bodies, accredited non-governmental organizations and private sector entities, where appropriate.

21. Steps to this end will include the following:

(a) Reviewing gaps in utilization to identify periods when the Centre could be made available to eligible organizations without affecting significantly the conference requirements and resource availability of ESCAP;

(b) Designing, with the assistance of an external consultant, a comprehensive marketing plan for the Centre and producing promotional materials to encourage its use by organizations that require conference facilities and whose goals are in accordance with those of the United Nations;

(c) Actively soliciting regional organizations to hold seminars or conferences at the Centre;

(d) Promoting the availability of the Conference Centre to Member States and organizations working with ESCAP towards common regional goals;

(e) Promoting the availability of the Centre to specialized agencies of the United Nations in the region;

(f) Developing an electronic database of suitable organizations in the region to receive marketing materials on the Conference Centre and monthly updates on availability;

(g) Expanding the current Internet presence of the Centre to further disseminate marketing materials and allow for an automated query function;

(h) Monitoring the leads generated to define the success rate of the marketing exercise.

22. With reference to the above and to increase the flexibility of the meeting room set-up, it is planned, subject to the availability of funds, to refurbish one of the large conference rooms with interpretation facilities and one of the small meeting rooms without interpretation equipment and to introduce a flexible seating arrangement that could accommodate a variety of non-traditional meeting formats, including, for example, United Nations-organized staff training courses.

23. It is expected that these actions will lead to increased utilization of the Bangkok Conference Centre during periods when it is not fully utilized by ESCAP for its mandated requirements.

III. Utilization of the Conference Centre at Addis Ababa

Background

24. The United Nations Conference Centre at Addis Ababa became operational in 1997. Its facilities comprise a plenary hall with seats for 84 representatives and 168 advisers and a total capacity (including sections for observers and galleries) of 667, six large committee rooms with approximately 40 seats each, all equipped for simultaneous interpretation, and two smaller committee rooms with no interpretation equipment.

25. No statistics on utilization are available for 1997, but usage at the beginning was slow, which should be considered normal for a new facility. Since 1998, however, utilization increased steadily. The number of events held at the Centre increased from 343 in 1998 to 356 in 1999, and from 176 in the period from January to June 1999 to 228 in the same period this year. In terms of days of occupancy, the utilization rate of all conference rooms was 54.5 per cent higher from January to June 2000 than in the same period in 1999.

Constraints

26. The lack of financial resources allocated specifically for the marketing of the Centre within or outside the United Nations system has been a major obstacle to increasing the usage of the facility. In effect, no marketing efforts could be initiated from 1997 to 2000, and since marketing activities usually bring results two to five years down the line, the lack of funding has had long-term consequences. This situation has been compounded by an inadequate staff structure.

27. There has been considerable uncertainty concerning the Organization's vision for the Conference Centre. It has not been established, for example, whether the aim was merely to provide a venue for United Nations meetings essentially relating to African development or whether it was intended to service other United Nations and non-United Nations events, in competition with other venues on the continent or elsewhere, and become a legitimate revenue-producing operation. In this connection, there is still doubt as to whether the rates charged for use of the Centre should be geared towards partial cost recovery only or should be profit-oriented. Various departmental meetings originating in New York and Geneva have been held in the Centre during the past year, but there has been reluctance to reimburse ECA for the facilities, even on a cost-recovery basis, as there are no guidelines in this regard.

28. As a result of the operation of the headquarters rule and other legislated provisions regarding venue, very few events included in the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations are scheduled in Addis Ababa.

29. Competition in Addis Ababa itself has increased, with the Hilton and Sheraton Hotels vying for conference business and smaller hotels also trying to obtain a share of the local market.

30. The ongoing hostilities in the region since May 1998 have led to the cancellation of a number of events scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa, the most recent being the annual meeting of the African Development Bank, which was cancelled with one week's notice last May. The entire Centre had been booked for this event for more than a year, and other potential users had been turned away to make room for it. Various meetings of the Organization of African Unity have been cancelled for the same reason.

Action taken

31. A new Chief of the Conference Centre was appointed in February 1999, and although the Centre remained understaffed and funds were not available to implement a market strategy, efforts were made nonetheless to encourage foreign missions and locally based organizations to make greater use of the facilities. A notable example of success in this field was a major meeting held at the Centre by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) as an immediate consequence of direct marketing, which resulted subsequently in repeat business. The Government of Ethiopia and various local entities have also made more use of the Centre than previously.

32. At the same time, the programme managers of the various divisions of ECA have also been encouraged to make greater use of the Centre rather than organizing meetings away from Addis Ababa.

33. A proper business centre was established and started functioning in mid-1999, and it has been a strong factor in attracting major meetings to the Centre. It has also proved to be quite successful in terms of cost recovery.

34. In March 2000 a group of journalists visited Ethiopia in advance of the Africa Travel Association (ATA), which held its twenty-fifth anniversary meeting in Addis Ababa in April/May. The group was given a tour of the Conference Centre and provided with lunch and promotional material; free editorial copy was expected as a result. Similar actions have been taken with other visiting journalists. The ATA meeting itself also gave the Centre exposure to a selected travel industry group with Africa as its prime focus.

35. In a further effort to increase usage, a new policy in respect of the charges applicable to various categories of clients has been established. Discounted rates now apply to certain categories, such as United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. The fact that this will probably result in lower revenue will undoubtedly be offset by greater use of the Centre and a higher occupancy rate.

36. Following the appointment of a new Chief of the Conference and General Services Division of ECA in January 2000, limited funds were made available for the first time for marketing purposes. These were provided specifically to fund participation in the two leading meeting industry exhibitions, namely, the European Incentive and Business Travel and Meetings Exhibition (EIBTM) in Geneva in May and the Incentive Travel and Meetings Exhibition in Chicago, United States of America, in October. Both events are highly specialized and are targeted specifically at conference buyers from all sectors.

37. In order to maximize the available funds, participation in EIBTM was done as a joint venture in partnership with Ethiopian Airlines and the Sheraton

and Hilton Hotels. In addition, two conference organizers based in Addis Ababa were invited to be present at the stand. Numerous visitors approached the stand, and there was undoubted interest in Ethiopia as a conference destination, but no knowledge of the infrastructure. There were many requests for additional information, and it was agreed among the partners to carry out both specific and general follow-up actions. The fact that the partners attracted as much interest as they did was a very positive development and gave a clear indication of the potential for future business. Certainly, it would be premature to expect immediate results, but the participation of the Centre can be considered an investment in the future. Assuming a return to peace and stability, it would be reasonable to expect concrete results within three to four years, provided the Centre maintains a presence at the exhibition every year. A one-time appearance would be a waste of time, effort and money.

Plans for the future

38. The Addis Ababa Conference Centre is at a stage where, in order to increase usage, it needs to position itself on the international arena as well as within the United Nations system worldwide. Prior to 1998, the majority of the events held at the Centre were local, United Nations-related and non-paying. Even now, most non-United Nations meetings held at the Centre could be considered relevant to the overall mission and vision of the Organization. Although usage has improved considerably and business from outside sources is on the increase, the Centre remains underutilized at certain times of the year, notably July/August and December/January.

39. Various strategies have been identified for the marketing of the Centre in the future, including:

(a) Identification of important roving international events;

(b) Participation in selected specialized trade shows;

(c) Active participation in the International Congress and Convention Association, of which the Centre is a member;

(d) Familiarization tours for journalists;

(e) Familiarization tours for conference organizers;

(f) Preparation of a general sales brochure and video;

(g) Updating of brochures and videos on the Centre;

(h) Advertising campaigns (media and web site);

(i) Mailings.

40. To be effective, a marketing campaign must be sustained and ongoing. To this effect, more guidance will be required as to vision and purpose, and more support will be required in terms of human and financial resources. In connection with the latter, any budget provision allocated to the Centre for marketing purposes could be supplemented with revenue generated by the Centre. Finally, there is an absolute necessity for the world to perceive that there is stability in the host country of the Centre.

IV. Conclusions

41. While in discussions with the Office of Internal Oversight Services or conference services managers, representatives of the two conference centres have emphasized different issues, the possibilities for increased utilization of the centres have been affected mostly by the same set of constraints.

42. Chronologically, the first among these has been the lack of a well-defined and clearly articulated vision of what should be the purpose of their use, beyond meeting the conference requirements of the respective regional commission. A related factor has been the restrictions imposed on the use of United Nations premises by the relevant legal and administrative framework and their applicability vis-à-vis pronouncements by Member States, such as the invitation to the Secretary-General, in section II, paragraph 17 of General Assembly resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997 to develop new income-generating measures, and the request of the Committee on Conferences[3] that the Secretariat prepare proposals on the utilization of the conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, including by non-United Nations entities (para. 57). Presumably, similar guidelines should apply to all United Nations conference facilities.

43. Although at times there has been a presumption that the utilization of both centres could be increased

by rerouting meetings included in the United Nations calendar of conferences from other venues, it is understood that this would not be feasible without explicit decisions by Member States relating to the observance of the headquarters rule and other provisions of the relevant legislation.

44. In both locations, however, the uncertainty referred to above is being overtaken by a pragmatic approach, which seeks to market the centres as a venue for meetings and events of selected categories of entities. To this end, in both ESCAP and ECE, staffing structures are being adjusted so that posts can be devoted exclusively to the management of the centres, and funds are being committed for marketing and promotional efforts.

45. The facilities at Bangkok and Addis Ababa are relatively new, and no new conference centre can expect its usage to take off to high levels in the first few years of operation. Even with good marketing from the beginning, it would be reasonable to allow some five years for awareness of the centre to be built up and its reputation for good facilities and services to be established. In both cases, promotional activities have begun in earnest only recently.

46. Despite the constraints described in the present report, the utilization of both centres is increasing, with the trend accelerating in the first half of the current year. With support from the United Nations system, and provided the necessary staff and financial resources are made available — not only for management and marketing but also to address the growing demand for services that will come with increased usage — utilization should improve considerably in the foreseeable future.

Notes

[1] To be issued as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 32* (A/55/32).

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 7* (A/54/7).

[3] Ibid., *Supplement No. 32* (A/54/32).

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Fifty-fifth session
Agenda items 45, 57 and 78

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Letter dated 21 September 2000 from the Permanent Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*

Upon the instructions of our respective Governments, we have the honour to forward herewith a joint statement by the Heads of our respective States, issued following their meeting held in New York on 8 September 2000 (see annex).

Our Heads of State reiterated their firm commitment towards lasting peace and stability in the region, an integral part of which represents the resolution of all aspects of the issue of succession to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including the status of that State and all its successors in the United Nations, on the basis of the principle of equality of all successor States.

We should like to request your kind assistance in circulating the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 45, 57 and 78.

(*Signed*) Muhamed **Sacirbey**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina

(*Signed*) Ivan **Šimonović**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia

* Also issued as document S/2000/897.

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(*Signed*) Naste **Čalovski**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Macedonia

(*Signed*) Ernest **Petrič**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia

Annex to the letter dated 21 September 2000 from the Permanent Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Secretary-General

Joint statement by the President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Alija Izetbegović, the President of the Republic of Croatia, Mr. Stjepan Mesić, the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Boris Trajkovski, and the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr. Milan Kučan

On the margins of the Millennium Summit a meeting was held between the President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Alija Izetbegović, the President of the Republic of Croatia, Mr. Stjepan Mesić, the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Boris Trajkovski, and the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr. Milan Kučan. The Presidents discussed the efforts of their respective States to achieve the speediest possible accession into the Euro-Atlantic integrations, mutual cooperation and succession to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as well as the political situation in South-East Europe.

At the meeting, the common position of four of the successor States with regard to succession to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was confirmed. The resolution of the question of succession to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, on the basis of the principle of equality of all successors, is a prerequisite to lasting peace and security in the region. The Presidents also underlined the importance of the consistent implementation of all existing decisions of the international community related to succession to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in particular, the decisions of the Arbitration Commission of the European Union/United Nations International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, as well as the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations, which confirm the legal equality of all the successors, and agreed, that pursuant to these decisions, the existing illegal practice in the United Nations be discontinued.

The four States shall continue to coordinate their activities aimed at ensuring the equal treatment of all of the successor States to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in international organizations. Additionally, it was emphasized that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) has to complete the usual procedure for admission to international organizations, as the rest of the successor States have done. It was agreed to seek the support of the European Union, the United States of America and the rest of the Member States of the United Nations for the achievement of their aims in relation to succession. The Presidents agreed that they would, following democratic changes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), advocate the lifting of sanctions and the swift admission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to the United Nations and other international organizations, when and if that State so requests.

Following the meeting of the Presidents of the four successor States, the President of Montenegro, Milo Đukanović, was invited to join the discussion, at which time he gave an account of developments in Montenegro.

Milan Panić, the former Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), who also subsequently joined the discussions, informed the meeting of his views on the situation in Serbia.

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Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 97
Training and research

United Nations University

Report of the Secretary-General*

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 53/194 of 15 December 1998, the General Assembly requested that the Secretary-General consider innovative measures to improve interaction and communication between the United Nations University (UNU) and the rest of the United Nations system.

2. The present report has been prepared in response to that request by the General Assembly. It supplements the report of the Council of the United Nations University on the work of the University in 1999 (A/55/31).

3. The present report is the third in a series dealing with this subject (A/51/324 and A/53/408). During the past year the University has continued to make significant progress in developing closer relations with other parts of the United Nations system. In December 1999, at its forty-sixth session, the Council of the University adopted a four-year strategic plan. The plan draws on the recommendations of a number of external evaluations conducted in 1998, and was developed in close consultation with representatives from different United Nations organizations and agencies. The strategic plan initiates what will be an ongoing planning process to be pursued at several levels within the UNU community. The planning process will benefit from feedback from the University's main stakeholders and partners. During the planning period (2000-2004), the University will begin to order its ongoing projects and new initiatives within two broad programme areas: peace and governance and environment and sustainable development. The programme on peace and governance focuses on pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict measures and governance issues. The programme on environment and sustainable development focuses on development, science and technology and environment, as well as interactions among these fields, and will pay particular attention to questions related to poverty and inequity, growth and employment, technological change, urbanization, natural resource management and sustainable energy use and production.

4. In a number of major public addresses, I have relied on UNU research findings regarding conflict prevention and poverty eradication. In Tokyo, in January 2000, the University organized a conference on the key challenges of the new millennium. The conference papers provided valued inputs for "We the Peoples", my report to the Millennium Assembly (A/54/2000). The University has also played a major role in the planning, development and implementation of such critical events as the Economic and Social Council's high-level segment on information technology.

* The footnote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

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II. The United Nations University in the context of the reform and revitalization of the United Nations

5. The University continues to be closely involved in the work and activities of the Economic and Social Council. It has provided valuable evaluations of United Nations economic flagship reports and made important submissions to a number of Economic and Social Council projects, most notably the policy papers that it is preparing on official development assistance and safety nets for social development. In addition, the University participated in the development of a proposal, in conjunction with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to strengthen the capacity of natural resource-dependent developing-country governments to formulate sound policies for sustainable resource-based development.

6. The work of the University on the causes of civil wars and on conflict prevention policies was particularly valuable in the preparation of the thematic essay that was used as the introduction to my annual report on the work of the Organization for 1999 (A/54/1).

III. The United Nations University and the intergovernmental processes

7. **General Assembly and Economic and Social Council**: The United Nations University continues to support the work of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly. In 1999, the University published a number of papers prepared for an expert group meeting held in New York 1998 under the auspices of the Secretariat, which examined the economic and political implications of the Asian crisis. Subsequently, the book, *Global Financial Turmoil and Reform: A United Nations Perspective* was published by the UNU Press. This study is part of a new series on policy perspectives designed to disseminate policy-related research of interest to the international community, the United Nations and its Member States. Another book in the same series, *Globalization: The United Nations Development Dialogue* was published earlier this year. The latter collection is based on material drawn from Economic and Social Council debates on finance, trade, poverty and peace-building. Both volumes were widely circulated to representatives of Member States at Headquarters. This year the University organized a policy panel to discuss issues raised by the theme of the high-level segment of the Council, "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based economy". The members of the panel were drawn primarily from the UNU research network. The University also helped finance the work of the high-level panel of experts on information and communication technology, which met at Headquarters from 17 to 20 April 2000, and which produced a report for the Council. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research and UNU have continued their fruitful collaboration, organizing seminars and workshops using UNU research as a basis for training delegates in New York on issues relating to the environment and trade.

8. **United Nations global conferences**: During the past decade the University has provided significant support for key United Nations conferences. It continues to play a role in their follow-up and implementation, especially in relation to capacity-building and impact-evaluation. In June 2000, in preparation for the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled, "Women 2000: gender equality development and peace for the twenty-first century", the University held a women's leadership research and training course. Course participants were mid-career female officials from government delegations to the special session of the Assembly. In cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the University is completing a study of the new roles and functions for the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions that will be brought to the attention of the General Assembly in the fall. As a follow-up to the Second World Water Forum, UNU will help lead the creation of a "World Water Development Report". The first edition of the report will be issued in 2002. It will include a global analysis of world water issues and a progress report on the implementation of the water-related objectives set out in Agenda 21, which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The report is intended to assist developing countries in improving their monitoring, assessment and reporting capacity, with particular focus on water quality, water use, human health impacts and river basin management.

9. The University is intensifying its efforts to disseminate its research and policy analysis findings more effectively. The United Nations University Press has played a critical role in this process, publishing 19 new titles in 1999. The various UNU web sites are an increasingly important means of communication with the University's constituency. The use of a range of media to promote University activities has become increasingly important. In March 1999, for example, the University contributed to a significant media campaign to mark the World Day for Water. In June 1999, to help celebrate World Environment Day, the University organized a series of activities. On World Food Day, in October 1999, a media campaign was organized in conjunction with the World Bank that highlighted the work of the University in the area of soil conservation. The number of University seminars, workshops and conferences has been increased, particularly in New York and Paris. For example, an important seminar was organized in New York in March 2000, at which international scholars and practitioners presented their analyses of the legal, political and economic aspects of the Kosovo crisis.

IV. United Nations University links with the United Nations analytical work

10. During 2000, the University has strengthened its working links with various United Nations organizations, in particular the Secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Numerous officials from United Nations bodies (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the regional commissions, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Bretton Woods institutions now participate in UNU meetings.

11. In July 1999, for example, the University, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, held an international conference on inter-linkages: synergies and coordination between the multilateral environmental agreements. A key output of the conference was the inter-linkages report, which explored inter-linkages among scientific mechanisms, information systems; institutions; finance; and issue-management.

12. The UNU is also participating in a four-year joint research project on nutrition with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and a number of national institutions. Due for completion in 2002, the project seeks to develop a new international growth reference for infants and young children, involving seven diverse geographic sites throughout the world.

V. Coordination and interaction within the United Nations system

13. **Secretariat of the United Nations**. Informal consultations are held regularly between the Rector and senior academic staff of the University and senior United Nations officials. Other contacts are maintained throughout the United Nations system at the working level. A central motivation for these extensive interactions is to keep the University abreast of the evolving policy analysis concerns and requirements of the system. As noted previously, the preparation of the University's strategic plan was based on in-depth consultations with United Nations officials. The millennium conference of the University was prepared in close cooperation with the Strategic Planning Unit and the office of the Deputy Secretary-General. Since 1996, the University has participated in the United Nations sabbatical leave programme. A representative of the University currently sits in the programme selection committee and the University has indicated its readiness to provide prospective applicants with support services and facilities.

14. **Participation in the Administrative Committee on Coordination**. The University is kept informed of the programme of work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and, in particular, about any issues to which UNU research and capacity-building activities could be useful. The Rector of the University has participated in all sessions of the Administrative Committee on Coordination since the fall of 1997. The University also continues to play an active role in the subsidiary machinery of the Committee, most notably in the work of its subcommittees on nutrition, water resources and sustainable environment. The above-mentioned World Water Development Report is an outgrowth of the work of the Subcommittee on Water Resources, in which the University is actively involved. The University has also

continued to take part in the work of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development.

15. **University collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**: The University continues to work with UNESCO in a diversified and extensive manner. UNU has worked closely with UNESCO on the follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education, the project for twinning universities (UNITWIN)/UNESCO chairs programme, the World Conference on Science, the management of social transformation programme, the International Hydrological Programme and the Man and the Biosphere Programme, as well as on capacity-building for education software and computer science curriculum development.

VI. Conclusion

16. The University continues to expand its activities and programmes despite the relatively modest level of its funding. Its research findings play an important role in policy formation in many parts of the wider United Nations system. However, in many areas there is a clear need for better communication between research producers in the University system and potential research consumers working in policy planning and implementation areas of the system. The University is addressing this need, in part through a new dialogue process initiated in Geneva this year, which brings research producers and consumers together to discuss how collaboration can be enhanced. At the inaugural meeting, the importance of using new information technologies to communicate research findings more effectively was stressed. The creative use of information technologies offers extraordinary opportunities for the University, not only to communicate more effectively with the rest of the United Nations system, but also to help address the capacity-building needs of the developing world.

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Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 92 (d)
Macroeconomic policy questions: science and technology for development

Progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/201

Note by the Secretariat

1. In its resolution 54/201, on science and technology for development, the General Assembly took note of the resolution and decision adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999 on the basis of the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its fourth session; recognized the role of the Commission in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system in the area of science and technology for development; emphasized the importance of the activities to be pursued with the framework of the Commission and encouraged support for those undertakings; and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council, proposals for strengthening the coordination of mechanisms on the Commission within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in order to ensure coordination of the various efforts and activities in the area of new and innovative technologies, in particular information and communication technologies, and their applications in such areas as electronic commerce, with the objective of promoting complementarity of activities within the United Nations system.

2. The Secretary-General was also requested to submit to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/201. The present note has been prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat in response to that request.

3. The UNCTAD secretariat has prepared the report of the Secretary-General containing proposals for strengthening the coordination of mechanisms on the Commission requested in resolution 54/201. The report has been submitted, under the symbol A/55/96-E/2000/84, to the General Assembly at its present session, through the Economic and Social Council, which took note of it at its substantive session of 2000.

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4. The report summarizes previous discussions in the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the issue of coordination and presents a number of proposals for strengthening coordination mechanisms, in particular the steps to be taken by the UNCTAD secretariat to create an electronic network relating to science and technology for development, as a means to achieve coordination in the area of science and technology policy and programmes and to improve information sharing, knowledge diffusion and generation of ideas among all relevant United Nations agencies and other major players in this field, including the private sector. The UNCTAD secretariat has already started the process of establishing such a network, expected to be operational prior to the end of 2000. The follow-up to General Assembly resolution 54/201 is also directly relevant to the recent ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council (see A/55/3, chap. III) concerning the role of information and communication technologies in the context of a knowledge-based economy and the proposal to create a task force on information and communication technologies.

5. A more detailed report on the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/201 will be prepared following the fifth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, which will be held at Geneva in the spring of 2001, and will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-sixth session.

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Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 60 (b)
United Nations reform: measures and proposals: The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

Letter dated 22 September 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to refer to General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, entitled "United Nations Millennium Declaration", and to convey to you hereunder the reservations of my country's delegation concerning some of the items the Declaration contains.

I. Section II, the fourth subparagraph of paragraph 9, calling upon all States to consider signing and ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

My country's delegation deems it essential for further measures to be taken to reinforce the international arrangements for the punishment of perpetrators of the most grievous crimes against international peace and security. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was elaborated for the prosecution of the weak alone. It must thus be amended to ensure the prosecution of all perpetrators of acts of aggression. As long as there is no agreement among the States Members of the United Nations on the definition of certain basic concepts contained in the Statute of the International Criminal Court, such as the crime of aggression, my country can under no circumstances sign or ratify the Statute.

II. Section II, the fifth subparagraph of paragraph 9, on taking concerted action against international terrorism

My country is of the view that international efforts to eliminate terrorism will be to no avail as long as terrorism is not defined internationally, fairly, democratically and scientifically by the States Members of the United Nations in such a way as to differentiate between it and the legitimate rights of peoples to freedom and self-determination. It is neither rational nor acceptable that some

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should classify the struggle of peoples for freedom and the ending of foreign occupation as terrorism while ignoring genuine terrorism as exemplified by the imposition of iniquitous sanctions, occupation and invasion, military bases, the deployment of naval fleets, the exclusive possession of weapons of mass destruction and the threat and use of force.

III. Section II, the eleventh subparagraph of paragraph 9, calling on all States to consider acceding to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

My country's delegation is of the view that this Convention, in addition to its not having been negotiated in the framework of the United Nations, does not take account of the legitimate defence and security interests of some Member States in that it addresses only simple and limited weapons. As one of the peoples of the third world that would have the capacity to defend their boundaries and the interior of their territories against powerful possessors of sophisticated aircraft and in-flight refuelling aircraft only by deploying this weapon, we are of the view that humanity's concern should focus on the destruction of nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and chemical and biological weapons and not on mines, which are the simplest of all types of weapons.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 60 (b).

(*Signed*) Abuzed Omar **Dorda**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative